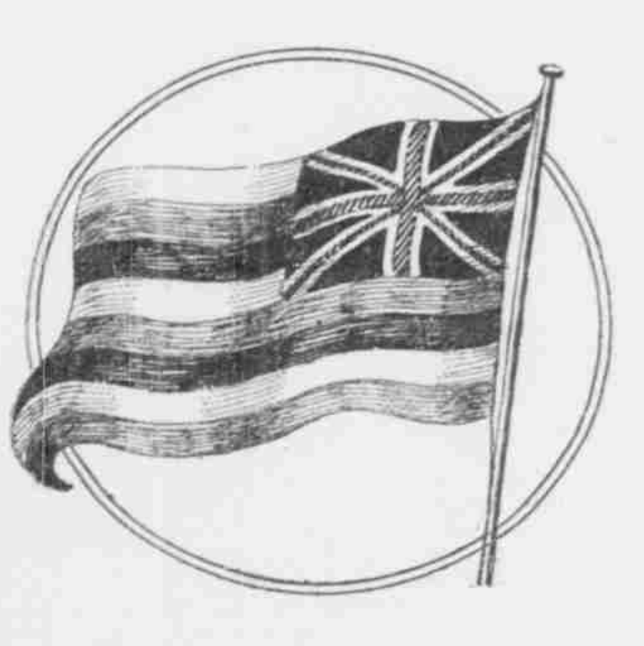
FLAG OF HAWAII

Ensign That Has Long Floated Over These Islands.

FROM TIME OF KAMEHAMEHA I

Mystery Concerning Design—Mentions of First Use—The Apt Suggestion of a Russian.



(Thrum's Annual, 1880.)

We exceedingly regret to report an unsuccessful search for the history of the present flag of these Islands, the time of its adoption and the parties interested in its formation; but after diligent inquiries and research through volumes of voyages, histories, periodicals and manuscript journals during the past three years, we have to acknowledge the main fact lost in oblivion, while reference thereto in various voyages and histories are confusing and contradictory.

There is a general idea and belief among many of our old Residents that the present Hawaiian flag was made by the late Capt. Alex. Adams before his voyage to China in the brig Kaahumanu, in 1817 and was by him first flown not only in the Chinese waters, but on the coast of California. Others again have the impression that a flag was brought from China by him; but we can gather no information corroborative as to who was authorized in Chinese waters to design a flag for this, even small kingdom, though the description given, viz: A St. George and St. Andrew's cross in the corner filled in with blue, with a field consisting of red and white stripes, shows almost virtually the East India flag. Referring to Capt. Adams' journal, we find the following mention only, that touches upon the points in question: "April 1816 the King of these Islands, having a strong passion to purchase the brig (Forrester of London) and expressing the same, Capt. Ebbetts and myself were accordingly deputed to treat with him, but he would not purchase her without I would enter his service as her commander. I resultingly acquiesced, the brig being given up to him at Kealakekua, and called by him Kaahumanu.........I was accordingly honored on taking command with the flag of his Majesty and a salute of eleven guns."

This certainly refutes the general belief that the flag was made by Capt. Adams, as his own narrative shows a flag to have been here before him; but whether the present one or some other, we cannot gather, for it is evident that there has been more than one. In another portion of his journal is an allusion to a flag—but also without description—that has no doubt given rise to the idea of his making the flag; where, at Waimea, Kauai, at which port he had touched from Honolulu for supplies, en route for China, he notes: "March 12, 1817......Gave the King our ensign to hoist in lieu of the Russian, who said it was on account of his having no other."

It is to be borne in mind that the allusion here is to the King of Kauai, and not Kamehameha, as Kauai was under its own King till 1821, and his possession of a Russian flag while the principal town was occupied by a Russian colony, was not strange.

Finding these theories of Capt. Adams' authorship exploded by his own writings, search was made in other directions, with the following result: Vancouver in his last visit, 1793, when he assured Kamehameha of England's friendship and protection, gave him an English flag, which we find by Archibald Campbell, in his "voyage 'round the world, 1806-1812," arriving at these Islands December 1808, that the English colors were used, for he says: "The King's residence, built close upon the shore and surrounded by a palisade upon the land side, was distinguished by the British colors."

Jarves states (p. 96), describing the period of about 1816, speaks of the flag as somewhat similar to the present, viz.: "English union with seven alternated red, white and blue stripes." This, however, is not corroborated by Lord Byron in his voyage of the Blonde in 1825, in which he describes the flag as follows: "On all days of ceremony the Sandwich flag is hoisted on the forts! it has seven white and red stripes, with the Union Jack in the corner." (pp. 121.)

This is almost the East India flag before described, and confuses the searcher after truth as to when the several changes took place. If Jarves is correct in the flag he describes, and he certainly was in a position to know whereof he wrote, it is a grave error in the recorder of the voyage of the Blonde to give so different one nine years later. The present flag has eight stripes, representing the eight Islands of the group—white, red and blue, with Union Jack in the corner. Capt. Hunt, who was here in the Baselisk in 1845, is said to have changed the relative position of the colors of the stripes by placing the white on top instead of at the bottom, though there is a possibility of this being the time of adding the eighth stripe, Jarves and Byron mentioning only seven. Capt. Hunt is also accredited with designing the royal standard now in use.

(Thrum's Annual, 1886.)

The Annual for 1880 contained an article on the Hawaiian flag, which, though acknowledged unsatisfactory from is incompleteness, was as full and reliable as the time and means at our disposal allowed.

By the courtesy of G. D. Gilman, Esq., of Boston, and the kind researches of Hon. J. Mott-Smith, Hawaiian commissioner at Washington, both former residents of these Islands, the following extract from the Polynesian of May 31, 1845, is received and is valuable as affixing the time and authorization of the latest change which, in the Annual of 1880, defined the period as 1845 and accredited its alteratoin to Capt. Hunt, of H. B. M's S. Baselisk.

"At the opening of the Legislative Council, May 25, 1845, the new national banner, was unfurled, differing little, however, from the former. It is :"Octo, parted per. fess. first fourth and seventh argent; second, fifth and eighth gules; third and sixth azure, for the eight Islands under one sovereign, indicated by crosses saltire, of St. Andrew and St. Patrick quarterly, per saltire counter charged, argent and gules."

The regulations concerning the flag as in use at this time, were compiled by Maj. Geo. C. Potter, of President Dole's staff. The law was passed quite recently.

The Advertiser has been able to get quite definite account of the change by Kamehameha from the British to the Hawaiian flag. The departure was suggested by a Russian and this was during the war of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain. The Russian pointed out to the Monarch that display of the British flag here would indicate sympathy or alliance with that nation in the war then being waged. Kamehameha saw the force of this at once and hastened to make a change.

FAIR AND FIRM.

An Anecdote of Kamehameha I, the Warrior King.

(Thrum's Annual).

The following story, illustrative of manners and customs of the olden times, narrated to us a short time since, is interesting, as showing remarkable traits in the character of Kamehameha I, the warrior King, and which, we believe, has never before been in print.

In the early days of foreign intercourse with these Islands, it was the custom that all trading with the vessels should be done first with the King, then the Chiefs, according to their rank and station, and after them the Commoners.

At the time of Captain Barber's visit to Honolulu, in the brig Arthur this custom prevailed, and in accordance therewith, a short time after his arrival, he was visited by Kamehameha, where a number of foreigners were testing and lauding the good qualities of the Captain's rum, which he had for trade. On the King being seated, he early negotiated for and concluded a purchase, the same to be delivered him the following day, but before leaving, desired to have a couple of bottles of the rum, which was readily handed him, presuming it to be for the night's use in a carousal. Eearly the next day the King came aboard, accompanied by his retinue, with his various containers, and seated himself in a chair on deck, to superintend the transfer of his purchase. After watching the operation closely for a short time, and perceiving a difference of color from what was shown him, he dispatched an attendant for one of the bottles obtained the day previous, on receipt of which he suspended the measuring operation, called for a glass, and received some of the rum from the open cask, then into another glass he poured some from the bottle. These he placed side by side, held them up to the light, smelt of them, tasted them, then cooly said: "Barber! here no all the same," eyeing him closely all the while. Barber saw he was detected in his attempt to palm off what he had weakened, but endeavored to pacify the King by assuring him it was some mistake, and he would have a cask of the better kind brought up. This, however, was all to no purpose, for the King ordered all his containers to be emptied back, and his people to their canoes, and thus left the vessel, telling the chiefs they might trade if they desired, he had got all he wanted. But, strange to say, no trading was done with the brig Arthur by the Hawaiians.

On the loss of the brig Arthur, in October, 1796, on the southwest point of Oahu, which now bears his name, Captain Barber was seriously troubled at the thieving propensities of the natives, taking not only what drifted ashore, but appropriated to their own use whatever they fancied from the stores-stock of trade, or portions of the vessel itself. In his trouble he came up to Honolulu to seek assistance from John Young, and together they concluded to set out for Kailua, Hawaii, whither Kamehameha had gone. Taking a boat, they set sail from Honolulu, reaching Kailua at early morn, after a somewhat tedious passage, to find that the King was in the woods directing his canoe builders. Off they started to lay their complaint, and came up to the royal party about noon, just as the King was dividing rum around among the workmen—as was said to be his custom—passing some to Young on learning their errand. Barber feeling exhausted from his sea and shore trip, desired Young to ask the King if he might not have a drink, as he felt, indeed, thirsty, and could not understand why he had been so slighted. Young replied that it would not do for him (Young) to do so, he, (Barber) would have to ask himself. So, mustering courage, he asked the King if he might not have a glass to refresh him, after so long a travel in the hot sun. Kamehameha looked at him sternly, and said: "O, Barber, you no like rum; you like water." Barber felt the rebuke of his former action keenly. The King, however, passed him the bottle. After the noon meal, and the King had learned the particulars of the loss of the Arthur, and the object of his visit, he cooly told Barber to go back. The Captain wished Young to entreat the King and know his meaning, remarking: "Are we to get no help for our pains; all this trip for nothing?" But Young said there was no help for it; there was nothing left for them to do but to obey. They returned, therefore, to Kailua, and found the boat had been already provisioned for the return trip, and on shoving off, a native, bearing a small, white bundle, sprang on the stern sheets, where he sat, neither speaking to any one, nor sleeping the whole trip. On the boat reaching Honolulu, he was the first to leap ashore, and was lost sight of. The next afternoon Barber's things were all being brought in and placed side by side at Pakaka, Robinson's wharf—even to pieces of rope, bolts and nails. The silent voyager had been one of the King's spittoon-bearers, sent with a royal command to deliver up all belonging to the wreck of the brig Arthur.

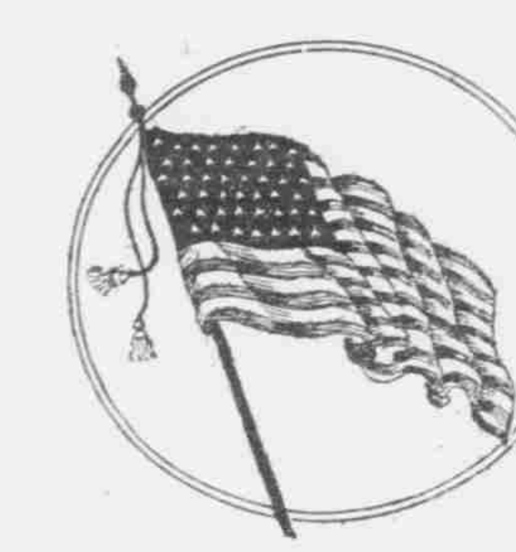
Kamehameha, in all his intercourse and dealings with foreigners, showed that he was ever their friend.

ABOUT OLD GLORY

Flag That is Being Carried Now to Many New Lands.

HISTORY OF NATIONAL BANNER

Recently Compiled Account—Claim of Paul Jones—Flag Has Age—An Inspiring Emblem.



BY FREDERIC VAN RENSSELAER DEY.

"The star spangled banner, oh, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

The mysterious influence of patriotism has its fountain head in the flag of our country. It gleams upon us from the stars; it is fastened to our existence by the immovable, unchangeable stripes. Its brilliant red teaches us to remember the heroes who brought it into existence to symbolize the birth of freedom. Its cerulean blue is emblematic of truth, of honor, of principle, and of that kind of glory which is everlasting. Its spotless white typifies the purity of purpose which actuated our forefathers who conceived it. "Its stars are the coronet of freedom; its stripes, the scourges of oppression. Wherever it appears, it is the symbol of power and the shield of safety; who clings to it, not all the tyrants on the earth can tear from its protection. There is no influence more august, there can be no holier thrill than that which the flag of our country inspires in every patriot's breast."

An American poet has aptly termed our banner the "Scarlet Veined." It seems like a channel through which the heart throbs of a mighty nation impel the life giving, liberty loving fluid of its people. It generates the atmosphere of freedom that we breathe; it creates the higher impulses which we absorb; it speaks to the highest and to the most lowly in the same even tone of power, of steadfastness, of unalterable and unqualified promise.

Tradition asserts that the prophets of old were no more directly inspired than was our own Washington in its selection. Picture those grand men, our national creators, as they were gathered together in that grim old Philadelphia chamber, to consult and agree upon the adoption of a national emblem, as they had been directed to do by the Continental Congress. There were as many designs as there were men at that solemn conclave, and yet to Washington, upon whom all eyes rested, all hearts depended, every thought concentrated, there was not among them one which conveyed his heart's exalted hopes for the future of his country.

He alone submitted no design. He had imagined many, but was satisfied with none; and at last, perplexed, he rose in his place, so to state. Just then the sunlight streamed through the diamond paned window of the gable, high above their heads, and fell upon the table before him. The prismatic gleams begat colors and resolved themselves into shape before his eyes. The framework of the window separated the bars of light in their descent, so that when they met again upon the table they became stripes of red and white. Washington raised his eyes, and through the window saw the blue dome of heaven beyond, where so many nights, upon the battlefield, he had watched the glimmering stars. Instantly he saw the flag of freedom.

History has not recorded the words in which he gave the fruits of his inspiration to that august assembly, but with one voice his suggestions were adopted, and on the 14th of June, 1777, Congress resolved "that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes of alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, while in a blue field, presenting a new constellation." Thirteen has proved to be America's lucky number.

It is only fair to add that there is another account of the source from which the pattern of the Stars and Stripes was drawn—an account that is less picturesque, but perhaps more historical. It is pointed out that Washington's coat of arms consisted of stars and stripes, and that either he or, more probably, some other member of the committee—there is no actual evidence as to the individual originator of the design—adopted these heraldic emblems as no less appropriate for the banner of the army he commanded.

Be this as it may, historians agree that, some time during the first days of that eventful June, Washington, accompanied by other members of the committee, called upon Mrs. Elizabeth Ross at 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, and from a rough draft which he had made she prepared the first flag. Washington's design contained stars of six points, but Mrs. Ross thought that five points would make them more symmetrical. She completed the flag in twenty-four hours, and it was received with enthusiasm wherever displayed. "Betsy" Ross was manufacturer of flags for the government for many years, and was succeeded by her children.

A volume could be written upon the early history of the Stars and Stripes. There has been much controversy as to its first appearance on the field of battle. "My hand hoisted the first American flag," declared John Paul Jones, the pugnacious Scot who afterwards became famous as captain of the Bonhomme Richard; but this must have been one of the earlier banners, as the final pattern had not been adopted when Jones was serving as lieutenant on the Revolutionary frigate Alfred. John Adams claimed the honor for a New England officer. "I assert," he said, "that the first American flag was hoisted by Captain John Manly, and the first British flag was struck to him." Manly was a Massachusetts sailor, whose schooner, the Lee, captured the British ship Nancy almost at the beginning of the war. His ensign was probably one of the pine tree flags, of which several different patterns were flown as early as the battle of Bunker Hill.

It was probably at Fort Schuyler, then beseiged by the British, that the Stars and Stripes received its baptism of fire. The beleaguered patriots had some difficolor. They had to cut up linen shirts for the white stripes, and to patch together pieces of scarlet cloth for the red, while a blue field camlet cloak, captured from a British officer, served for the canton. The flag's first important battle was that of Brandywine, where it suffered a defeat that was speedily and amply revenged when it flew in triumph at the capture of Burgoyne's army at Saratoga.

Today, when New York is expressing her outburst of patriotic feeling by flying a hundred thousand flags, we can afford to recall the curious fact that it was the last American city to greet the stars and Stripes, more than six years after its adoption as our national banner. King George's colors dominated the metropolis from a few days after the disastrous battle of Long Island till the end of the war. On the day agreed upon for the evacuation of the city—November 25, 1783—when the American troops reached the Battery at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, they found a British flag hoisted there upon a tall pole, with the halyards cut away. The departing garrison, the last of whom had just embarked, evidently wished to see their colors flying as long as they were in sight of land; but a young American soldier, Van Arsdale by name, climbed the pole, tore down the offending ensign, and set the Stars and Stripes aloft, in full view of the retreating squadron.

It is recorded, however, that the flag had been flown in New York earlier in the day. At sunrise a local boarding house keeper, whose name history does not seem to have preserved, ran up the Stars and Stripes over his residence. His daring action was reported to Cunningham, the British provost marshal, who ordered the rebel ensign down, as the garrison claimed military possession up to the hour of noon. The order being disregarded, Cunningham came in person to haul down the flag. Before he could touch it the mistress of the house rallied to its defense with a broomstick, which she wielded with such vigor and success that the provost marshal retreated in confusion, with the loss of most of the powder in his wig.

May 1, 1795, brought the first change in the Stars and Stripes. Vermont and Kentucky had been admitted to Statehood, and Congress decreed that the flag should thereafter contain fifteen stars and fifteen stripes. It soon became evident that the continual addition of new States would destroy the symmetry of the flag, and it was Captain S. E. Reid, of the famous privateer General Armstrong, who suggested to Congress the plan upon which the flag is built today. April 18, 1818, saw the restoration in perpetuity of the thirteen stripes, and provision made for the addition of a new star on every Fourth of July succeeding the admission of a State to the Union. Captain Reid's wife made the first flag with the original number of stripes, and with twenty stars, arranged in the form of one great star.

"Old Glory" is among the oldest of flags, although we are one of the youngest of nations. The present flag of Spain was adopted in 1785; the tricolor of France in 1794; the Union Jack of Great Britain, in 1801; the banner of Portugal, in 1830; of Italy, in 1848, and of the German Empire, in 1871. It is claimed for the Stars and Stripes—and no flag except the French or the British can possibly dispute the claim—that it has been in more battles, and has waved over more victories on land and sea than any banner in the world, and there is not a European standard for which so many men have fought and died. Something like a million lives have been laid down, that the Stars and Stripes might continue to wave over the land of the free.

Until two years ago all the American flags used in the army and navy of the United States were manufactured at the Brooklyn navy yard, but they are now also made at Mare Island, San Francisco. At these government factories the work has been reduced to an exact science. The bunting is carefully weighed, the colors tested with chemicals, the stars and stripes measured to the breadth of a hair, and every stitch counted with minute exactness. The floor of the measuring room is a geometrical problem which might puzzle a professor of mathematics—a sort of mosaic combination of polished brass, hard wood, and arithmetic. The "hoist" of the standard flag must, to the fraction of a millimeter, be precisely ten-nineteenths of the length.

Before the beginning of the present war with Spain, fourteen women were kept busy stitching flags; now there are forty-four, and it is curious to see them working as diligently upon the flags of Spain as upon the Stars and Stripes. Every United States ship carries a full complement of flags of all nations, and of signal flags, and all these are made by our own government. Just now Spanish flags are in especial demand; our ships are even searching the high seas for them!

There is a new design in which the flag workers have made a special display of their skill—the President's flag. It has never yet appeared upon a battlefield, nor floated above a man-of-war, but the day may come when an American chief magistrate, making the grand tour of our territory, may take it with him to Cuba, to Porto Rico, or to the Philippines.

There is only one woman admiral in the world, the Queen of Greece. She holds this rank in the Russian navy, an honorary appointment conferred upon her by the late Czar, because her father held the rank of high admiral.